

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response the Office Action dated May 8, 2006 (Paper No. 20060503). A petition to extend the time for this response to within the first extended month accompanies this submission. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection made in the last Office Action for the following reasons.

Claims 1 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(4) as allegedly being anticipated by Noguchi (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0104631). Noguchi has an effective date of December 3, 2002. The present application has a priority date of July 30, 2002, based on the Applicants' corresponding Japanese Application No. 2002-220889. Thus, Noguchi is a reference that can be overcome by the Applicants' priority claim.

A claim for foreign priority has already been made in the present application, and a certified copy of the priority documents has been filed and acknowledged by the Examiner in Paper No. 20050212. The Applicant will submit as soon as it is available, an English translation of the priority document, along with a signed statement from the translator that the translation is accurate, pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.55 and MPEP §201.15. Upon review of the translation, it is believed that the Examiner will be able to confirm the Applicants' right to rely on the foreign priority date to overcome the rejection based on Noguchi.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that all of the pending claims 1 and 12 are now in condition for allowance, and request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued for this application.

Application No. 10/624,603
Amendment dated September 8, 2006
Reply to Office Action of May 8, 2006

Docket No.: SON-2781

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application into even better form, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Dated: September 8, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By

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